

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-4, 6-18, and 21-31 are currently pending. Claims 5 and 19 have been canceled without prejudice; and Claims 1, 15, 16, and 29-31 have been amended by the present amendment. The changes to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-4, 15-18, and 29-31 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over “the admitted prior art” in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,539,366 to Doyle et al. (hereinafter “the ‘366 patent”); and Claims 5-14 and 19-28 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of Claims 1-4, 15-18, and 29-31 are rendered moot by the present amendment to the independent claims. Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitations recited in allowed Claim 5. Accordingly, based on the indicated allowability of Claim 5, Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 1 (and dependent Claims 2-4 and 7-14) are in condition for formal allowance.

Independent Claims 15 and 30 recite limitations analogous to the limitations recited in Claim 1. Moreover, Claims 15 and 30 have been amended in a manner analogous to the amendment to Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claims 15 and 30 are rendered moot by the present amendment to those claims.

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 16 is rendered moot by the present amendment to that claim. Claim 16 has been amended to incorporate the limitations recited in dependent Claim 19. Accordingly, based on the indicated allowability of Claim 19,

Applicants respectfully submit that Claim 16 (and dependent Claims 17, 18, and 20-28) are rendered moot by the present amendment to Claim 16.

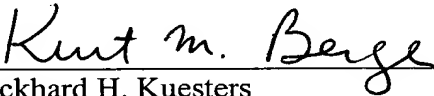
Independent Claims 29 and 31 recite limitations analogous to the limitations recited in Claim 16. Moreover, Claims 29 and 31 have been amended in a manner analogous to the amendment to Claim 16. Accordingly, for the reasons stated above for the patentability of Claim 16, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of Claims 29 and 31 are rendered moot by the present amendment to those claims.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 15, 16, and 29-31 are in condition for formal allowance.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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